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Rights of the Child

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MEETING OF THE STATES PARTIES TO THE CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD

SECOND MEETING

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 4th MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Wednesday, 11 November 1992, at 10 a.m.

Temporary Chairperson: Mr. HOUSHMAND
(Representative of the
Secretary-General)

Chairperson: Mr. KALPAGE (Sri Lanka)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.35 a.m.

OPENING OF THE MEETING BY THE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE UNITED NATIONS

1. The TEMPORARY CHAIRPERSON, speaking on behalf of the Secretary-General, said that since the first Meeting of the States parties to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, an additional 22 States had become parties to the Convention. The rapid increase in ratifications and accessions was unprecedented and constituted an encouraging indication of the international community's interest in promoting the rights and welfare of the world's children.

2. During its first session, the Committee on the Rights of the Child had adopted the provisional rules of procedure, and general guidelines for the reports to be submitted by States parties under article 44 of the Convention. The Committee had considered other important issues, including its cooperation with specialized agencies and the United Nations Children's Fund, its relations with other United Nations organs and treaty bodies, the dissemination of information on the Convention and the Committee's participation in the work of the Preparatory Committee for the 1993 World Conference on Human Rights. At its second session, the Committee had continued to discuss its participation in the preparatory activities for the Conference, and among other topics, had discussed the question of children in armed conflicts.

3. Regarding the duration of the Committee's future meetings, he drew attention to a note submitted by the Secretary-General (CRC/SP/7) that referred to article 43, paragraph 10, of the Convention, which provided that the duration of the Meetings of the Committee should be determined by a meeting of the States parties, subject to the approval of the General Assembly. Recalling General Assembly resolution 46/112, the Committee itself at its second session, had supported organizing its work on the basis of two sessions a year, of three weeks each, and one-week meetings of a pre-sessional working group approximately two months in advance of each session.

4. Mr. RAVEN (United Kingdom), speaking on behalf of the States members of the European Economic Community which were parties to the Convention, said that the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) could not automatically continue the membership of the former Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. In that regard, the European Community and its member States supported General Assembly resolution 47/1 and opposed Yugoslavia's participation in the current Meeting.

5. Mr. METSO (Finland), speaking also on behalf of Denmark, Norway and Sweden, said that they did not recognize the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia as the successor to the former Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. Stressing the applicability of General Assembly resolution 47/1, the Nordic countries opposed the presence of representatives of Yugoslavia at the current Meeting.

6. Mr. WILLIS (Australia), associating itself with the European Economic Community, said that his Government supported General Assembly resolution 47/1, which did not recognize the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia as automatically continuing the membership of the former Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, and therefore opposed the presence of its representatives at the current Meeting.

7. Mr. THEUERMANN (Austria) said that his Government wished to associate itself with the previous speakers in their position regarding the status of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

8. Mr. SY (Senegal) joined the previous speakers in support of General Assembly resolution 47/1 and reiterated the position taken by the Organization of the Islamic Conference, to which Senegal belonged, to the effect that the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) was not the automatic successor to the former Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

9. Mr. MONGBE (Benin) said that his delegation also supported General Assembly resolution 47/1, but that in the interests of the children and the fact that the Committee had much work to do it should drop the political discussions.

10. Mr. ELDEEB (Egypt) fully supported Senegal's position, which reiterated that of the Organization of the Islamic Conference.

11. Mr. DJORDJEVIC (Yugoslavia) expressed surprise that the right of his Government to be present at the current meeting was being challenged, given that Yugoslavia had both signed and ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child and should therefore be allowed to participate in the meeting of the States parties to the Convention. He said that General Assembly resolution 47/1 referred specifically to participation in the work of General Assembly and, recalling the letter from the Legal Counsel (A/47/485, annex), said that Yusoslavia had the right to participate in other meetings. His delegation intended to participate in meetings pending any final decision and considered it was in the best interests of the international community to have as many States parties to the Convention as possible.

ELECTION OF THE CHAIRPERSON

12. Mr. SY (Senegal) nominated Mr. Kalpagé (Sri Lanka) for the office of Chairperson.

13. Mr. YAHYA (Indonesia), Mr. MONGBE (Benin) and Mrs. CASTRO de BARISH (Costa Rica) seconded the nomination.

14. Mr. Kalpagé (Sri Lanka) was elected Chairperson by acclamation.

15. Mr. Kalpagé (Sri Lanka) took the Chair.

CREDENTIALS OF REPRESENTATIVES

16. The CHAIRPERSON drew attention to rules 2 and 3 of the rules of procedure of the Meetings (CRC/SP/5) and said that the Secretary-General had yet to receive proper credentials from a number of States parties represented at the Meeting. He suggested that, in accordance with rule 3, the representatives of those States parties should be provisionally authorized to participate in the Meeting, and at the same time urged them to see to it that their credentials were submitted to the Secretary-General as soon as possible.

17. It was so decided.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

18. The agenda was adopted.

ELECTION OF OTHER OFFICERS OF THE MEETING

19. The CHAIRPERSON said that under rule 4 of the rules of procedure, the Meeting had to elect one to four Vice-Chairpersons from among the representatives of the States parties, and noted that at the previous Meeting of the States parties, one Vice-Chairperson had been elected.

20. Mrs. SILVA-SUNIAGA (Venezuela), speaking on behalf of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States which were parties to the Convention, nominated Mr. Rosenberg (Ecuador) for the office of Vice-Chairperson.

21. Mrs. CASTRO de BARISH (Costa Rica) and Mrs. ALVAREZ (Dominican Republic) seconded the nomination.

22. Mr. Rosenberg (Ecuador) was elected Vice-Chairperson by acclamation.

DETERMINATION OF THE DURATION OF THE MEETINGS OF THE COMMITTEE ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD AS PROVIDED IN ARTICLE 43, PARAGRAPH 10, OF THE CONVENTION, IN ACCORDANCE WITH GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION 46/112 (CRC/SP/1992/L.1)

23. Ms. STROM (Sweden) introduced the draft resolution on determination of the duration of the future meetings of the Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC/SP/1992/L.1) and said that Argentina, Barbados, Benin, Burkina Faso, Canada, Costa Rica, Cyprus, Ecuador, Egypt, Ethiopia, Israel, Kenya, Mexico, Namibia, Rwanda, Tunisia, Zambia and Zimbabwe had joined its sponsors. As of 29 September 1992, 123 States had become parties to the Convention. In order to consider all reports submitted in 1992 and 1993 before the end of 1995, the Committee had proposed that, beginning in 1993, it should be authorized to meet twice a year, each time for two to three weeks and that, in addition, a pre-sessional working group should be established for a preliminary review of reports prior to the session of the Committee.

(Ms. Ström, Sweden)

24. In its resolution 46/112, the General Assembly had supported the proposal by the Committee and decided to take appropriate action at its forty-seventh session. It was for the States parties to consider the Committee's proposal. The draft resolution would have the General Assembly take a final decision on the organization of the Committee's future work. It was hoped that the draft resolution would be adopted by consensus.

25. Mrs. CASTRO de BARISH (Costa Rica) said that consideration should be given to the idea of increasing the number of the members of the Committee from 10 to 18 in order to enable it to carry out its mandate more effectively, particularly in view of the expanding workload. Furthermore, in that way, more States parties would be able to participate in the Committee's work.

26. Mr. YAHYA (Indonesia) said that, while his delegation basically supported the draft resolution, it felt that the wording of paragraph 1 should be further clarified with regard to the duration of the sessions. While his delegation supported the holding of two sessions annually, he felt that they should be for reasonably short periods. Lastly, Indonesia supported the comments made by the representative of Costa Rica.

27. Ms. STROM (Sweden) said that it was for the Committee itself to decide on the duration of its sessions. In view of the need to carry out a preliminary review of reports, it felt that the pre-sessional working group should meet approximately two months in advance of each session.

28. Mr. HOUSHMAND (representative of the Secretary-General) said that, at its second session, the Committee had expressed the wish to hold two sessions of three weeks' duration in 1993 and a one-week meeting of the pre-sessional working group of approximately two months in advance of each session. The Committee would decide on the duration of each of its regular sessions on the basis of its workload.

29. Draft resolution CRC/SP/1992/L.1 was adopted.

CLOSURE OF THE MEETING

30. The CHAIRPERSON declared the Second Meeting closed.

The meeting rose at 11.40 a.m.